

The Devil's Pitchfork

The PCs have been trapped in Hell for longer than they can remember. A rumor is heard of a possible escape: The Devil's Pitchfork. It might be the only way home. It also might be safer to stay in Hell!

Intended for 1E AD&D, but can be adapted to other systems.

✧ X Staran, The Crossroad ✧

Two 20' diameter tunnels intersect within the Pitchfork's central pillar. One runs west-to-east (aligning with the portals in V and IX); the other is a vertical shaft leading down (to a lethal fall) and up to XI.

Anyone falling down the shaft plummets over 200' before hitting the roof above it.

A dozen rough wooden beams (rather like railroad ties) criss-cross the upper shaft at different levels. They can be used to climb up, but the sixth and tenth beams are rigged to collapse if more than 50 pounds of weight are put on them. A trio of shadows lurks among the beams, and nothing pleases them more than to send adventurers falling to their deaths.

The round hatch to XI is locked; only the arjale key from inside the scarecrow's head (from I) can open it.

✧ V Faram Toisgeal, The Brass Chamber ✧

A dark, 10' wide pool of water is in the center of this teardrop-shaped room. The walls are polished brass. A 20' tall gong stands on the west side of the room; an iron golem with a massive hammer in its hands (does 4d12 damage) stands guard in front of it.

The gong can only be rung with the golem's hammer, which needs three people working together to lift and swing it—each of them must have a STR of 16 or higher. Once struck, a circular portal (20' diameter) will open in the eastern wall. It lines up perfectly with a 20' tunnel going through the central pillar of the Pitchfork (see X). The noise, which lasts 10 rounds, is deafening! It does not cause damage or permanent hearing loss, but it will make speech impossible to hear while it sounds.

After the gong is silenced, the portal will close, and it can only be opened from inside by a strike on the gong—the portal doesn't even exist from the outside. Striking the gong while the portal is open will "reset the clock" on the 10-round countdown.

✧ IV Dubh Uisce, The Chamber of the Deep ✧

This chamber is filled with rank, stagnant water, which has bits of glowing seaweed and kelp floating around in it. A faint circle of light is visible above.

The water does *not* pour out of the hatch into III when it is opened; it is magically confined to the chamber. An eye of the deep floats about in the darkness.

The chamber has a 10' wide circular opening at the top, which emerges into V.

✧ III Ioma-Ghaoth, The Chamber of Chaos ✧

A roaring whirlwind fills this entire chamber. The upper part of the room is completely obscured by a spiraling mass of black smoke; 100' above the floor, the cyclone begins tapering to a point, which terminates 5' above the floor.

This uncontrollable whirlwind will pull any creatures (man-sized or smaller) within 10' of its perimeter off their feet and send them tumbling into the air.

There are long iron spikes sticking out of the walls in the upper part of the room. The ceiling has handholds and a hatch leading to IV. The spikes, ceiling, and hatch are all concealed by the smoke. For every round a PC spends in the whirlwind, roll 1d10, add the PC's DEX Reaction Adj., and consult the table below.

Roll	Result	Roll	Result
1-4	Slammed into multiple spikes (3d10 damage), then flung to the floor from a height of ((d6 + 6) × 10) feet.	6-7	Flung out of the whirlwind to the floor (2d10 damage).
2-3	Slammed into a spike (3d10 damage), then yanked back into the whirlwind (roll again next round).	8-9	Make Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll. Succeed: grab handhold on ceiling (see 10 ↑ below). Fail: can't keep grip (1d10 damage), yanked back into whirlwind (roll again next round).
4-5	Slammed into a wall (3d10 damage), then yanked back into the whirlwind (roll again next round).	10 ↑	Grab handhold on ceiling and maintain grip; 1d4 rounds to pull your way to the hatch to open it.

✧ II Aingéal Tuíteamach, The Chamber of the Fallen ✧

The walls are a mosaic of white angels and black demons (think Escher + Doré + Bosch). A wide spiral staircase with no handrails runs up the center of the room to a ladder below a hatch in the southwest corner of the ceiling (leading to III).

If anyone reaches the halfway point of the stairs (or otherwise gets to a height of 70' above the floor), all the PCs are attacked—by eight of the angels (erinyes in disguise), who detach themselves from the walls and fly screeching at the intruders.

✧ XI Mullach, The Chamber of Ways ✧

The entire Pitchfork operates like a tuning fork: the central pillar (X and XI) is "out of phase" with the rest of the tower. It appears to vibrate and blur in and out of existence. It cannot be interacted with unless *both* gongs (in V and IX) are ringing simultaneously. When this happens, the central pillar shifts into phase with the rest of the structure, and it can be entered and otherwise interacted with. PCs inside X or XI when the gongs stop remain "in phase" with the central pillar, allowing them to remain inside, but anyone outside (or anyone who leaves the central pillar while it is out of phase) will need to sound the gongs again in order to enter.

A number of stone archways ring the perimeter of this room of arjale. The archways all open on blank stone faces except one. This door has an image of a grim reaper above it, which speaks to the PCs: "One must pass through my gate before the others may pass through theirs." This "death's gate" is filled with an inky blackness that swallows all light and sound. (Note to DM: The number of gates is variable: make the number of closed gates plus death's gate equal to the number of PCs in the room.)

The fate of the PCs is up to the DM, but should follow this general guideline: If one PC goes *willingly* through death's gate, he should be transported to a place of relative safety; the other gates will then open, filled with the same inky blackness, allowing the players to pass (to whatever place the DM thinks is appropriate). If, on the other hand, an *unwilling* PC is forced through death's gate, that PC will still land in a place of safety. However, death's gate will close, becoming a blank stone face like the others. The lights go out, and the remaining PCs will be trapped in the chamber forever.

✧ IX Faram Deas-Lámh, The Bronze Chamber ✧

Bladed pendulums swing back and forth in this bronze-walled room at different heights and speeds. Amazingly, none of them strike each other; they speed up, slow down, and wind in and out of each other's paths in a confounding intricate pattern. A 20' gong stands on the north side of the room.

Treat the pendulums as a permanent *blade barrier* spell,¹ doing 8d8 damage every round to anyone in the room. However, PCs are entitled to a DEX check every round; success means damage is halved.

The longest pendulum, anchored at the room's peak, is actually the "hammer"—the tips of the curved blade are blunted, and it is the only thing that can sound the gong. The gong is on a wheeled rail which runs around the room's perimeter. It needs to be pushed along the rail to the eastern side of the room and held there so the pendulum can strike it.

Once struck, a circular portal (20' diameter) will open in the western wall. See V for information on the portal's alignment with X and its duration.

Note that if the gong is *not* secured in place, it will roll back along the rail to the north side of the room in 2 rounds. If it is somehow secured in place on the east side of the room, the pendulum will always strike it every 5-8 rounds, effectively keeping the portal open as long as the gong remains in place.

✧ VIII Ifrinn, The Chamber of Flames ✧

A vertical tunnel of roaring flames fills the passage above. Although the 10' "core" of the room is free of flames, the superheated air is almost as damaging as the fire. Being inside the flames causes 6d6 damage per round; being inside the core does 4d6 damage per round.²

Spells or magic that produce cold- or ice-based effects³ will beat the flames back within its area of effect (reducing the damage to half), but this only lasts a single round—then the flames roar back to life. The hatch to IX is on the ceiling.

✧ VII Sár-Shealladh, The Chamber of Falsehood ✧

A shady, wooded glade stretches out in all directions, complete with cool waterfalls and fresh sea-scented breezes. A group of five adventurers greet the PCs warmly and share their tale: months ago, they also tried to use the legendary Pitchfork to escape Hell—and failed. The rumor of a portal leading back to the world of men is just that: a rumor, nothing more.

Rather than face the horrors outside, they have combined their magic and resources to create a "safe haven" within the eastern spike of the Pitchfork. They discourage the PCs from going on, begging them to stay and become contributing members of this peaceful sylvan retreat.

This is actually a pack of five bearded devils. This illusory haven is meant to trick others into lowering their guard (making them easier prey), but whether the PCs elect to stay or leave, the devils *will* try to kill them all. If the devils are defeated, the illusion dissipates, and reveals the chamber to be a tangled nightmare of rotting trees, thorn bushes, and stagnant pools of brackish water. The hatch to VIII is in the ceiling: some of the rotting trees are tall and (barely) strong enough to climb to reach it.

✧ VI Ioma-Shtighe Suthainn, The Chamber of the Lost ✧

Lights and shadows move and reflect off the innumerable planes of force that shift throughout this room. They move in directions that seem impossible, confusing you so badly that you can't even find the door you just came in through. Sounds emanate from within as well...whispers? Cries for help? Are the voices even *human*?

Treat the room as a permanent *maze spell*,⁴ which affects everyone in the room instead of a single creature. Its power is phenomenal: it takes *sixty times longer than normal* to find an exit. For PCs with an INT ≤ 8, the player must make a WIS check every 4 hours. A failed roll means that paranoia and despair have driven the PC insane.⁵ Note that if a PC succumbs to exhaustion and falls asleep while looking for the way out, that PC's countdown for "time trapped" resets.

When an exit is finally found, roll a die: odd = it's the door leading back out into it; even = it's the hatch leading up to VII.

¹ *Player's Handbook*, page 51.

² Make item/equipment saving throws vs. magical fire (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 86).

³ *Cone of cold*, *ice storm*, etc., and DM's discretion.

⁴ *Player's Handbook*, page 90.

⁵ *Dungeon Master's Guide*, pages 83-84. Recommended forms of insanity include melancholia, delusional insanity, mania, paranoia, hallucinatory insanity, hebephrenia, suicidal mania, or catatonia. PCs only succumb to one form of insanity—once they fail a WIS check and go insane, further checks are not made.



✧ I Bealach, The Entryway ✧

Massive doors¹ open into a cathedral-arched hallway. Just inside the doors is a giant rotting scarecrow² with a SOME GO THIS WAY sign under its right arm (pointing to II) and a SOME GO THAT WAY sign under its left arm (pointing to VI). It holds a large brass key in its right hand (the only thing that can open the hatch to II), and an identical key of brass in its left (the only thing that can open the hatch to VI). The keys can be removed easily, but any attempt to damage the scarecrow will cause it to attack. A *third key*, forged of arjale, is hidden inside the scarecrow's head—it is the only thing that will open the hatch leading from X to XI.

¹ 20' × 8' × 1'; not locked, but a combined STR of 55 is required to pull one open.

² AC 4, MV 9", HD 8, 2 att. (2d6 each), size L.